30 TIPS

FOR A GUILT-FREE RAMADAN!

BY: ABU PRODUCTIVE

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A Guilt-Free Ramadan?

Want to have a guilt-free Ramadan? A Ramadan where you don't gain weight from overeating at iftars, don't miss a single suhoor so you're not tired the next day at work, actually finish reading the Qur'an during the month, pray all your taraweeh/Nawafil prayers (and of course, obligatory prayers) on time and in perfect concentration, focus on ibadaat intensely in the last nights of Ramadan instead of going on a crazy shopping frenzy for Eid?

Sounds impossible, right?

Let's find out. Read on.

If only you had started earlier...

Each Ramadan you tell yourself the exact same words.

"If only I started preparing for Ramadan earlier..."
"If only I did my Eid shopping before Ramadan began..."
"If only I practiced praying Tahajjud prayers and waking up before Fajr..."
"If only I had learned more about fasting so I'm not stuck with random unanswered questions..."

And what's the result of this procrastination? Check out the story below and see if it sounds familiar (maybe a bit too familiar).

He was so happy to hear the radio announcement that Ramadan had arrived! His eyes filled with tears and his heart was soaring – 'Alhamdulillah,' he said. 'Allah Ta'ala has blessed me to live to reach another Ramadan.'

Ahmed had been waiting for this day, waiting for Ramadan to begin, especially this year. He just started to understand his deen better and really wanted to practice all that knowledge he learned and make Ramadan a truly transformative, spiritual experience for himself.

He ran upstairs to his room to get ready for taraweeh, took a shower, put his best thobe on and drowned himself in so much itr that his mum could smell it from downstairs!

"Ahmed! Anymore itr and you'll be a walking perfume shop! Come downstairs, dinner is ready!"

"Coming, Mum!" he replied.

His face was beaming. His whole family was so proud to see this young Muslim man so excited and ready for Ramadan.

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Now he reaches his 7th day of Ramadan, and something starts to go wrong...he misses suhoor, oversleeps through Fajr prayer, and work becomes so busy he can't make it for taraweeh some nights; also he's been going to lots of iftar parties recently and the food is so awesome that he's too stuffed to even pray 2 rak'ah taraweeh after it!

"What's wrong with me?" he asks himself. "I'm losing it, I don't feel that same Ramadan buzz I had in the first couple of days..."

He feels things are starting to go downhill. It's the 15th of Ramadan, and he has barely finished the 10th juz, and promises himself he'll catch up over the weekend...it's just that work is crazy during the week, and he can barely concentrate anymore – fasting is becoming harder – and his boss isn't happy with his productivity.

He feels horrible. "It's just gonna be one of those Ramadans..."

He pushes himself in the last days: iftar, taraweeh, suhoor. Repeat. And before he knows it---it's over.

Ramadan is over and he didn't get the best out of it!

Ramadan is over and he didn't feel the transformative spiritual experience he was hoping to feel!

Ramadan is over and he's feeling guilty.

He feels intensely sad. Cries and promises himself that if next Ramadan comes, he'll not have another 'guilty Ramadan'.

The above story is a fictional story of Ahmed, but it represents the experience of many of us. We enter every Ramadan with so much hope, then we stumble for a couple days and we accept defeat – Ramadan ends, we feel guilty, we tell ourselves that we will do better next Ramadan, only to repeat the same pattern above the next time round.

I call this the Ramadan Guilt Trip.

Before I dive into the reasons of the Ramadan guilt trip, I want to ask you a question: in the expected life cycle of a human being, how many Ramadans does a Muslim live through?

40 Ramadans? 60 Ramadans? It's not a lot, is it? If we don't make the most of these Ramadans, how will we stand in front of Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) on the day of Judgment when we'll need every ounce of good deed?

Think about it.

10 Reasons for the Ramadan Guilt Trip!

So what are the reasons for falling into this guilt ride every month? Here are 10 reasons I thought of:

1. Unrealistic Expectations: Each year we go into Ramadan with extremely high expectations of ourselves. How many times have you heard people promise themselves they'll finish the Qur'an 5 times this Ramadan; or that they will pray taraweeh and tahajjud every single night? There is nothing wrong with high aspirations; in fact, we should have high goals to challenge and improve ourselves. However, knowing ourselves, we shouldn't make our goals unrealistic, thereby putting a lot of psychological pressure on ourselves. So when we feel that we 'slipped,' even slightly, we lose all hope of 'making it' and fall into the oh-well-maybe-next-year syndrome instead of re-adjusting our plans and expectations.

2. We don't ease into Ramadan: We see a mega transformation in ourselves during the first days of Ramadan - we're waking up an hour early before Fajr even though we may not be trained to wake up that early during normal days. We pray 20 rak'ah taraweeh when we barely prayed the sunnah prayers before. We read 10-20 pages of Qur'an each day when we normally barely read a page or two a week! What's the result of this big push? We can only sustain it for a few days – then we lose track, realize it's too hard, and we're back to square one.

3. Lack of consistency: The moment we reach the middle of Ramadan, our hectic schedule begins to overtake us and we slip; our daily routine of reading 10 pages of Qur'an after Fajr is no longer taking place; going to taraweeh every night soon becomes every other night; waking up for tahajjud is replaced by waking up a bit before Fajr for suhoor; and we drop our consistency when we most need it.

4. Lack of knowledge: Not equipping ourselves with practical knowledge about making most of Ramadan is a big factor in having a Ramadan guilt trip. Lack of understanding the virtue of Ramadan, and lack of understanding of the psychological, physical, and emotional ingredients to have a fulfilling Ramadan is also a factor.

5. Lack of community support: Ramadan seems like a personal battle for each of us. No one really talks about their spiritual experiences and how well they are keeping up with their Ramadan resolutions. We seem to fight ourselves in Ramadan. There's not much of a support group or discussion – just me, myself, and I.

6. Lack of time management: "Time management? What time management? Oh you mean that thing when you're supposed to allocate certain tasks at certain times...brother, please, what are you talking about? This is Ramadan, things are different in Ramadan...it's Ramadan! We can't manage time in Ramadan, it would be nice just to get time to sleep properly, man..." I rest my case.

7. Lack of energy management: Nutrition and sleep seem to be the first casualty during Ramadan – we don't eat properly, we don't sleep properly, hence we can't function properly and we fall into the Ramadan Guilt Trip!

8. Lack of fitness: "Are you crazy?! Fitness in Ramadan?! Dude which planet do you come from?" No, I'm not crazy. Fitness is very possible in Ramadan, and in fact, I'll argue that it is quite important too.

9. Missing the spiritual link: Ah, the crux of Ramadan – developing our spiritual self and taqwa of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala. Somehow we forget that Ramadan is a time for spiritual renewal. We lose ourselves halfway through Ramadan and the next thing we know, we've boarded the roller coaster ride of a guilty Ramadan.

10. Lack of training: We don't plan for Ramadan, we train for Ramadan. Ramadan is the arena for the believers, a chance to perform our best, and reap the benefits. But it needs all-year training. As any Olympic athlete will tell you, you need to practice for the big race and not just turn up on the event day and expect to win!

Now I know I'm generalizing and maybe the above 10 reasons for falling into a guilt-ridden Ramadan do not apply to you, but I want you to search through your memories and experiences of Ramadan and ask yourself if any of the above 10 reasons were actually the root causes for you having an 'unproductive Ramadan.'

The Good News

There is good news, of course! If any of the above was true for you, you're not alone!

Millions of Muslims around the world face these traps and have trouble with them each and every Ramadan. I've received SO many e-mails from ProductiveMuslim readers across the world complaining about their lack of productivity during Ramadan and not making the most of the special, blessed month. So you're not alone, and there's a solution.

Step back a little...

I want us to step back a little and think to ourselves, why are we even talking about this? What's the big deal of just having another Ramadan in 'survival mode' and just hoping for the best in akhirah?

Imagine you're given a month to spend in a goldmine and all you come out with is copper. Won't you feel disappointed, perhaps stupid? That's the metaphor for those who go into Ramadan and get very little out of it.

Ramadan is full of enormous spiritual wealth, treasure chests of hasanat and rewards given to us on a golden plate and all it requires is some effort from our side. In fact, Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) made it so easy for us that he locked up those annoying, crazy, evil shayateen so they don't do their annoying whisperings in our ears and stop us from making the most of Ramadan...what more do we want?!

Also, let's look at the big picture and think on the level of the ummah as a whole: as an Ummah, are we happy with the way we're making the most of Ramadan? To be honest, it's a little embarrassing the way we Muslims are during Ramadan: we become unproductive and lazy, our shops and businesses virtually stop during the day and go crazy at night. Ramadan has been misunderstood to be the month of late night shopping and all day sleeping, and truly we've abused the message of this blessed month so that even Non-Muslims started having negative impression about the month – not a very good form of dawah. May Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) forgive us.

A bit about ProductiveRamadan.com

The truth is, brothers and sisters, we need to seriously re-think the way we are spending our Ramadan, and we need to make some serious efforts to have a productive Ramadan – both on an individual level as well as on an Ummah level.

We need to build a system and community that prepares, trains, and supports us all in having a fulfilling and productive Ramadan. This system should help us cover the following 7 practical points:

1. Understand the principles of "You Alone We Worship and You Alone We Seek For Help"

2. How to manage our energies to make the most of Ramadan and not feel tired.

3. How to focus at work, school, or home whilst fasting.

4. How to manage our sleep during Ramadan to make the most of the month.

5. How to develop spiritually during Ramadan.

6. How to use fitness to help us stay sharp during Ramadan.

7. How to manage our time effectively in the holy month.

This is where ProductiveRamadan.com comes in. ProductiveRamadan.com is here for you to reveal how to do all of the above 7 points and more through resources, e-mails, and this free eBook, which contains 30 tips or messages of Productivity to help you make the most of each Ramadan day.

How to use this book

This book should be part of your daily routine during Ramadan. Read the day's message then spend 10-15 minutes with our famous Ramadan Taskinator sheet to plan that day of Ramadan for yourself.

If our website ProductiveRamadan.com & all the advice in this eBook are not enough to help you make the most of Ramadan, or if you simply want to discover the secrets of a living Productive lives during Ramadan, we welcome you to join our online course where I'll be teaching tips, techniques, and ideas for you to have a truly Productive Ramadan, Insha'Allah!

For more information, visit
www.ProductiveRamadan.com/onlinecourse

On behalf of the Productive Muslim team, I wish you a truly blessed & Productive Ramadan!

Sincerely,
Your brother in Islam,
Abu Productive
Founder & CEO - ProductiveMuslim.com,
ProductiveRamadan.com

DAY 1

The Journey Starts Here – Bismillah!

It's finally here...the blessed month of Ramadan!

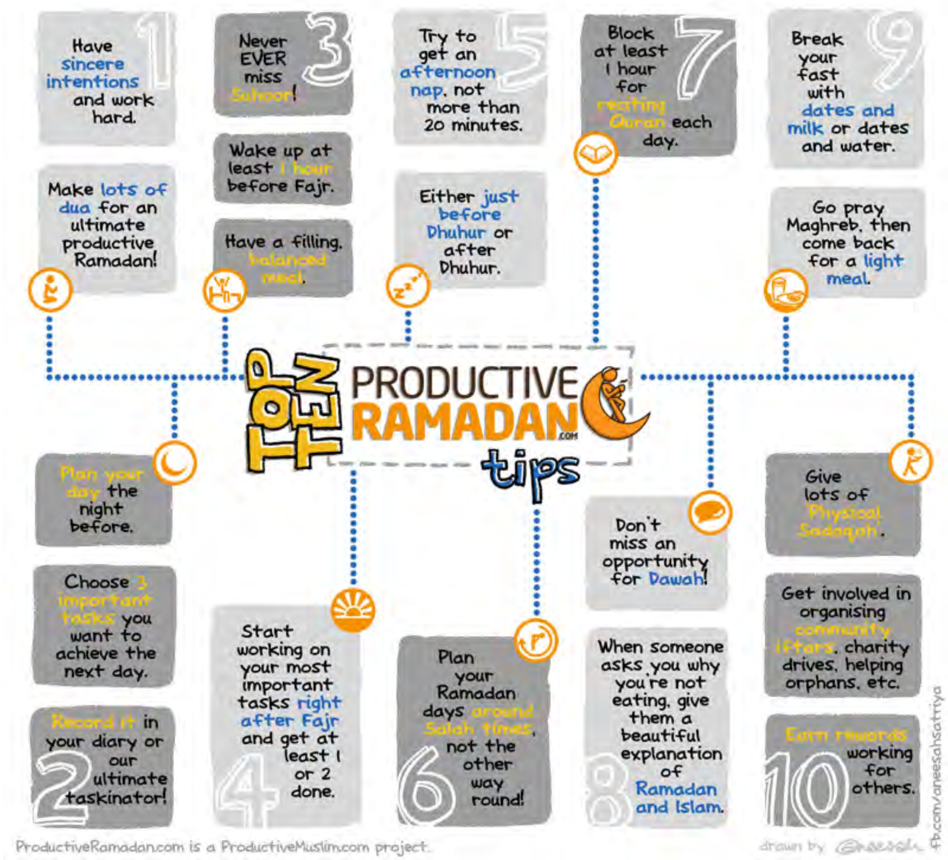
Today's tips:

• Purify your intention for fasting. Make sure it's purely for Allah's sake.

• Set multiple alarms for as late a suhoor as possible – not to be missed!

• Book one or two 30-minute slots of Qur'an recitation each day (you can add more slots, but these should be your bare minimum for the day).

For more tips on how to be Productive during Ramadan, check out our top 10 tips for a Productive Ramadan Doodle



DAY 2
Remember Last Ramadan?

How was it? Was it productive, or did you barely survive?

If you had an unproductive Ramadan last year, don't repeat it this year. Feeling guilty about last year's Ramadan won't benefit you unless you can use that guilt to light up a burning desire in you TODAY to do better this year, improve yourself, and not fall in the same traps as last year.

On the other hand, if you had a super productive Ramadan last year, Alhamdulillah! Try to recall what worked for you last year and how you can improve on that.

DAY 3
Are You Busy Yet Unproductive?

Whenever we think of 'unproductive people' during Ramadan, we think of people who waste time staying up all night watching TV and sleeping the whole day until Asr (or sometimes right through to Maghrib)!

But there's another type of unproductive person during Ramadan:
These are the workaholics – those who barely have time to worship Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) during Ramadan because they are so busy with life/work/family and everything else they are involved in. They also give no time to read the Qur'an, barely give charity, and Taraweeh prayer is simply out of the question!

You may argue that this is not too bad - at least they are 'productive.' But are they? Are they wasting their Ramadan? In the grand scheme of things, if they died today, will all their 'busy-ness' benefit them or will it be a 'waste'?

We need to be careful of this second type of unproductive behavior. It affects us all, especially those with busy schedules. Ramadan can easily slip from us due to our busy lifestyles and we'll only regret it on the last day of Ramadan. So let's not regret it this year!

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DAY 4

Time For A Daily Review!

Spend the last 10-15 minutes of each day of Ramadan reviewing your day. (This could be a simple mental exercise or written down).

If your day was productive, ask yourself what went right. What were the ingredients that made this day productive? How can I replicate this experience each day? Remember to thank Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala for blessing you with a productive day.

If it was unproductive, ask yourself what went wrong. How can I avoid such a day repeating itself during Ramadan? Ask Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala to help you make your future days productive. Renew your intention and be positive that, if you are granted life, the next day will be better.

You want to be constantly developing and improving each day during Ramadan, so that by the last 10 days you're at your peak Insha'Allah!

DAY 5
Productivity For The Sake Of...?

"Say, "Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the worlds" (Surah Al-Anaam, 6:162).

Therefore, our productivity and efforts should be directed to Him and to what He is pleased with. Sometimes we just perform actions for the sake of doing them, without considering the intentions behind them. Yet we know our actions are judged by the intention.

The next time you embark on any productive activity, ask yourself, "Is this for Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) or not?"

DAY 6
What's On Your Mind?

In our day-to-day battle to continuously stay productive during Ramadan, it's easy to become obsessed with some of the physical productivity issues; how many hours did I sleep? How many calories did I consume? Did I exercise?

Even though this is important, remember that physical productivity is only a means and not the end goal itself. In our definition as ProductiveMuslims, physical productivity is about optimizing your physical ability to enable you to serve Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala better and worship Him better.

What you should be concerned about is: Will Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala accept my fast? Did I pray on time with all the sunnahs? Did I read Qur'an? Remember, Ramadan is not about just making it to the iftar table at the end of the day. Rather it is about attaining a new level of spirituality with Allah through your actions.

DAY 7
When Will You Be Productive?

Today is a final call to all those who are yet to jump on the bandwagon of being productive for His sake to come aboard on our journey.

If you do not resolve to become productive this Ramadan, then when will you ever be productive? And if you're already productive, then is your productivity truly for His sake?

This Ramadan we want to make sure you have a 'guilt-free' Ramadan with no regrets, so you can take advantage of this opportunity!

DAY 8
Start At Suhoor

When should you start your day during Ramadan? Should you start early (thus have a longer fast day) or should you sleep as much as you can until you really have to wake up?

My advice: your productive day should start right after suhoor (no, I'm not joking!) Try this tonight/tomorrow and see how you feel:

Sleep as early as you can (ideally after Taraweeh). Then wake up 1 hour before Fajr and have a healthy suhoor. Relax after your meal, pray Fajr, read some Qur'an and then start your day's work. Work on 1 to 3 most important tasks of the day; these could be work-related or family-related. Whatever it is, make sure that:

- There's nothing more important than these tasks and
- You get them done and not get distracted

As many a hadith narrate, suhoor is a blessing - so don't miss it. Start your day with it.

DAY 9
Start At Suhoor - Continued

Below are answers to common questions about this technique:

Q. What's wrong with sleeping after suhoor?

A. If you ever wondered why your Ramadan days are so tiring and why you're always tired/moody at work/school, this may be your answer. Try staying awake after suhoor for a few days and you'll notice the difference in your attitude and productivity levels.

Q. You mean I shouldn't sleep from suhoor all the way till night?!

A. Of course not! That would be a killer! What is meant is that you stay awake for a minimum of 3 hours after suhoor to pray Fajr, read Qur'an and get 1-3 important tasks of your day done. After that you're "allowed" to sleep or take naps to prep yourself up before work/school or delay the nap to just before or after Dhuhr.

DAY 10
Oh No, I Missed My Suhoor!

Here are 6 quick tips if you've missed your suhoor and want to stay productive:

1. Don't panic: Calm down, pray Fajr, read some Qur'an. You'll be fine!

2. Don't obsess over it: Avoid constantly reminding yourself during the day that you missed suhoor, that you only had one meal last night, etc. Just having these thoughts is enough to drain your energy and give you an excuse to be unproductive.

3. Get on with your day: An athlete once said, "There's nothing more powerful than a made up mind." Make up your mind to be productive, talk to yourself like an athlete, and get on with your day!

4. Nap if you need to: If you feel super hungry, then take short naps/breaks to help yourself pull through the day.

5. Keep yourself busy: Ever had one of those Ramadan days that went by so quickly? Chances are you spent that day either super busy or doing something you really enjoyed. Try to do the same here and you won't feel that you even missed suhoor at all, Insha'Allah.

6. Make dua to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala to help you during the day. Remember the verse "It is You we worship and You we ask for help" (Al-Fatiha. 1:5). If we're fasting for Him then let's ask Him to help us with our fasting and to perform it correctly, whether we miss suhoor or not.

DAY 11
Time For A Pop Quiz!

Being a third of the way through this month, let's review your progress.

- How many days in the past 10 days have you managed to wake up for suhoor just before Fajr?
- How many days in the past 10 days have you managed to stay awake after Fajr and got some important work done in the early morning hours?

Give yourself one point for each day you succeeded. The higher you scored, the greater the sign that you're having a Productive Ramadan already!

These two ingredients are key to having a Productive Ramadan:

- Having suhoor as close as possible to Fajr ensures that you have the right amount of energy to keep you going the rest of the day.
- Staying awake after Fajr means that you're benefitting from the dua of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) in which he said: "O Allah, bless my Ummah in its early hours" and you are getting more work done compared to those who sleep till Dhuhr (or Asr)!

If you scored low in the above quiz, it's time to reassess your productivity and your time management during Ramadan. We're less than 20 days away from Eid! Let's make most of the remaining time we have.

DAY 12
What Level Are You On?

As we're approaching mid-Ramadan, we need to assess ourselves in terms of Spiritual Productivity, Physical Productivity, and Social Productivity.

Usually people can be divided into 3 categories around this time:

Category 1: Those who started well and continue to do well. These are the power-starters and those who push themselves each and every day to make the most of Ramadan!

Category 2: Those who started well, but slowly, start to slip in their good deeds. These are the people who had an amazing strong start, but soon they relaxed and next thing they know their schedules have gone hay-wire.

Category 3: Those who had a bad start and they are not sure what they can do to catch up.

For those in Category 1 - may Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) keep you steadfast! Keep up the good work and never ever let go! It is as narrated in the hadith that Allah loves good deeds that are done consistently.

For those in Category 2 - don't panic! Assess what needs to change in your life so you can get back on track and set yourself a target to do better in the next 10 days. Don't give up hope; the best part of this month is yet to come Insha'Allah!

For those in Category 3 - TODAY you must change! Get up now, make wudu, pray 2 rak'ah to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala and ask Him to help you make the most of Ramadan. If you continue as you are, come end of Ramadan and you'll face regret and, by that time, it'll be too late and you'll have no one to blame but yourself.

DAY 13
Don't Feel Like Being Productive?

One of the biggest plagues of productivity is inconsistency. If you've been finding it hard lately to pick your copy of Qur'an and read that one Juz', or to stand up for another 8 to 20 rak'aahs for Taraweeh after Isha, or any other good deed you used to do at the beginning of Ramadan before dropping it, then we have a simple and practical tip for you:

JUST GET UP & DO IT!

Take one small step towards the good deed and you'll be a mile off before you know it, Insha'Allah. Just pick up that Qur'an and read it. Just stand up and pray those 2 rak'ahs, then the next one, and the next one. Just drive to that local charity group and volunteer your time so you are surrounded by other people doing good deeds.

Once you get into motion, your heart and mind will follow. You just have to make that first step!

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DAY 14
Miss That Feeling?

Once you're able to get over the 'physical' barrier doing the good deed, it's time to get over the mental barrier. Ask yourself:

- Was it really that bad once I've done [the good deed] again and took the first step?
- What was stopping me before?
- How can I avoid this feeling of not 'feeling' like doing these good deeds from time to time?

We're not going to answer these questions for you: we want you to answer them. You may miss that feeling you had at the beginning of Ramadan, yet you shouldn't get hung-up with the thought that you just don't want to do it.

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DAY 15
Have You Hit The Halfway Mark?

Here are answers to a few frequently asked questions:

Q. How can you tell that you're physically tired vs. simply being lazy?
A. It's easy for our laziness to be masked as physical tiredness. We would stand at Taraweeh and our legs would be shaking or reciting Qur'an and our eyelids would be drooping, but the moment we go out of the mosque or close the Qur'an, suddenly we're feeling very energetic! We have to be careful of this, catch ourselves and rebuke it when we find out we're not tired, but simply being lazy.

Try to find the root cause for this laziness; is it lack of sincerity? Low eman? A sin you've committed that's preventing you from enjoying the good deed? Make dua that Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala removes such laziness from you. You don't want it to ruin your Ramadan. However, if your body is genuinely aching and you haven't slept properly for days, then you're physically tired and should get some urgent rest.

Q. How can one get over the mental thought "let me just skip this good deed this time, I'll do it later?"
A. "Tasweef" – the Arabic word for delaying doing things – is a common trick of Shaytaan. In fact it is one of his one of his best tricks yet. It sounds so good to delay a good deed until the 'perfect' time arrives; BUT the perfect time will never come. The perfect time is NOW! Also remember that each day of Ramadan that goes by without you doing as many good deeds as you can is a day that's gone forever, and you'll never see it again till the Day of Judgment. So how do you want to see your Ramadan days on the Day of Judgment? Full of good deeds or with empty slots because you kept 'skipping' good deeds?

If you've come halfway through this blessed month, don't let the good deeds slip; instead, invest in the few days which remain.

DAY 16
Success Only Comes From Allah

On this very day, over 1400 years ago, the great battle of Badr took place. We all know its story and how Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala granted victory to Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) on that day. But what lessons can we learn from this battle that is relevant to our productivity? Here's one:

After the battle was won, Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala revealed the following verse: "And Allah has already made you victorious at Badr, when you were a weak little force. So fear Allah much that you may be grateful" (Surat Aal-Imran; 3:123).

This was a reminder to the Muslims that any success or victory is from Allah and Allah alone. They shouldn't be arrogant and forget the source of their success. Sometimes when you're super productive and you achieve a great deal in a day, it's easy to assume that your success comes from your skills or knowledge; but that's not how a Muslim thinks. A Muslim firmly believes in the verse that "And my success is not but through Allah. Upon him I have relied, and to Him I return" (Surat Hud; 11:88).

Finally, on this special day, make dua for our oppressed brothers and sisters in many parts of the world. They are having a difficult Ramadan and the least we can do is make dua for them. We ask Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) with His Might and Power, the One Who granted His Prophet victory on the day of Badr to grant our brothers and sisters victory over their oppressors & all those who wrong them. Ameen!

DAY 17
What's Your Ideal Ramadan Day?

The last 10 nights of Ramadan will begin soon. This is the time we'll need to pull together all our energies and all our productivity techniques to make sure we invest in every moment of these last 10 nights to the best of our ability.

You are invited to download the Ramadan Taskinator today and start planning your last 10 days hour by hour. Ask yourself, "If I knew which night amongst the 10 nights is Laylut-Qadr (Night of Power), how would I spend that night?" Then replicate that 'ideal' night throughout the 10 nights or at least in the odd nights.

May the most productive amongst you gain the highest rewards in these last nights and the reward of Laylatul-Qadr! Ameen.

DAY 18

Are You Like The Old Man In Salah?

Two years ago, I prayed Taraweeh next to a very old man. I noticed that he struggled to get up or stand on his feet (he was shaking from weakness), but he stood up for the entire Isha and Taraweeh prayers. Someone might have told him to sit down and relax, but you could tell from his determination at every rak'ah that he wanted to stand up for Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala during Ramadan and didn't want to sit down.

The old man reminded me that sometimes the measure of how much you love someone is how much effort you're willing to put in for them. If we truly love Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala, shouldn't all of us put that extra bit of effort for Him?

Think of one area or one activity where you show Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala that you're putting that extra bit of effort for Him. It could be waking up for Tahajjud or praying those extra sunnah prayers or going out to feed people.

DAY 19

Busy In The Last 10 Nights?

If we are to think of our purpose in life and our ultimate destination, Jannah, the answer becomes very easy: sacrifice your days' work for 10 days so you can focus on night worship. However, not everyone can do so. So what can you do? Here's some advice:

- Employ good task and time management to be able to balance between work and worship. Check out the Ramadan Taskinator.
- Plan your day hour by hour and see which slots you need to be at work, which slots you need to be at the mosque, and what to do with the slots in between to maximize your energy/time. (e.g. power naps, light iftaar, etc.)
- Be ruthless in your time discipline and make sure that no minute is wasted. Otherwise it'll have a knock on effect on the rest of your day. Don't be complacent about time-wasting activities, and really get yourself on 'high-alert' mode.

Follow the above discipline like clockwork for at least the last 10 nights and you should be fine, Insha'Allah.

DAY 20
Natural Ways To Stay Awake

For people who are busy working during the day, it can be an extreme challenge to make the most of the last 10 nights for ibadah, and some may even resort to unnatural ways of staying awake, including consuming large amount of caffeine, which can be detrimental to one's health.

Here are natural ways of staying awake at night Insha'Allah.

• Nap: Master short bursts of power naps. These can range from 20 to 40 minutes, up to a maximum of 90 minutes. They are extremely powerful to keep you awake and going for at least 3-4 hours after the nap. Whenever you're tired and see a window of opportunity to take a quick nap - do so. This will help keep you going Insha'Allah.

• Food: What we eat affects whether we can stay up or sleep. The more we eat at iftaar/suhoor, the more we'll feel sleepy. Eat light and healthier for these 10 nights and you'll be able to observe the long night prayers easily Insha'Allah.

• Make dua that Allah blesses you with energy, blesses your sleep, and blesses your time so that you can make the most of these blessed nights and reach maximum productivity through them, Insha'Allah.

DAY 21
What Will Be Your ONE SPECIAL Good Deed?

What is the ONE special good deed that you'd want to remember your Ramadan with this year so you have no regrets by the end of it? Something you've never done before, something you've pushed yourself beyond your means and out of your comfort zone to achieve!?

Here are some ideas:

- Go on a full 10-day i'tikaaf (or less perhaps if this is your first time or if commitments don't permit)
- Take out your wallet and give the largest ONE donation you've ever given in your life to a charitable cause.
- Forgive that ONE person you said you'd never ever forgive.
- Get to know a poor family and vow to sponsor them as long as you live.
- Arrange an Iftar at an orphanage
- Donate an important piece of asset you have (e.g. land/property/farm) to Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala) in the form of Waqf (endowment).

Make this Ramadan truly memorable for your soul by doing something extraordinary this Ramadan! Think about it & take action!

DAY 22
What Will Be Your ONE Good Deed (Part 2)?

Today, think of the ONE good deed that you promise yourself to continue doing after Ramadan. Which one will it be?

Will it be praying Tahajjud every night from now on?
Will it be fasting every Monday and Thursday or at least 3 days of the month each month?
Will it be praying in the mosque for every single Salah?
Will it be reading one juz' of Qur'an each day?
Will it be continually giving charity at least once a week?

What will it be for you?

Remember, "the most beloved deed to Allah's is the most regular and constant even though it were little" [Bukhari].
These good deeds should be a part and parcel of your life well after Ramadan - so pick one and write it down and after Ramadan. Check yourself to ensure you consistently perform this good deed.
The ProductiveMuslim Habitator is an excellent tool to help you with this, Insha'Allah!

DAY 23
Are You Tired But Happy? :)

If you've been keeping up with a productive Ramadan, doing your best to balance between spiritual, social and physical productivity, you'll probably be a bit tired by now.

But honestly, aren't you happy that you're having a Productive Ramadan and hopeful that Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala will accept it? Imagine if you slept all day during Ramadan and stayed all up night having fun with friends and watching movies. Would you be as happy?

Our happiness and sadness is connected to how close we are with Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala. As human beings, we inherently feel happy when we worship Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala no matter how tired we get. Similarly we're 'programmed' to feel sadness when we're far from Allah, no matter how relaxed we are.

So if you're feeling a bit tired and drained these days, feel happy that you're doing your best, smile, and ask Allah to help you continue on His path!

DAY 24
A One-to-One With Your Heart

If you're standing in prayer in these last few days of Ramadan doing your best to 'feel' closer to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala yet somehow feeling distanced; if you're wondering why those around you are all crying like babies whilst you're completely emotionless; if you wish you could be of those with soft hearts and tearful eyes in Ramadan, but it doesn't seem to happen, and you fail to reach that level in your spiritual worship – then it's time to have a serious one-to-one conversation with your heart.

Ask your heart: why is it so cold? Why do the Words of its Creator have no effect or impact on it at all? Is it that arrogant that it doesn't need its Lord?!
Why is it so hard? Why are no emotions expressed for either fear or joy of being with its Creator? Why is it a hypocrite? It'll cry watching a movie when it knows it's not real but will not cry when it hears the truth about its ultimate destination?!

Keep digging deeper until you find the answer. Get your heart to break in front of Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala this Ramadan. There's no sweeter feeling than a sincere heart that cries out to Allah. Don't let Ramadan go without having cried even once in front of your Lord Insha'Allah.

DAY 25
A Practical Way To Scrub Your Heart Clean!

The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said: "There is a polish for everything that takes away rust; and the polish for the heart is remembrance of God" [Bukhari].

The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said, "Renew your faith!" It was said, "O Messenger of Allah, how do we renew our faith?" He (Peace be upon him) replied, "By saying la ilaha illa Allah ('There is no god but God') a lot" [Ahmad and Hakim].

So there you have it: two simple prescriptions to soften your heart, remove the rust from it and feel closer to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala, especially in these last few days of Ramadan.

Try it today. Say "La ilaha illa Allah" repeatedly - when driving, sitting at your computer, cooking, or playing with your child – just say it and keep saying it!

DAY 26
Will You Continue On This Journey?

A feeling of 'sadness' clouds our hearts around this time each year. We wonder if we'll ever continue being this spiritual and close to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala. Past experience has shown that we always fail to keep up after Ramadan, so what can we do to ensure the journey doesn't end here?

Here's a **video** on this topic in which I share 6 tips with. One of the big reasons why we 'fall' after Ramadan is that we lose self-discipline. We have this false idea in our mind that "It's Eid! Do whatever you want!" (Even though we don't actually say this, our actions certainly do!)

One of the best ways to fight this is to instill discipline in your life from day 1 of Eid. From day 1 of Eid, make sure you wake up early and stay up during those early hours of the morning! Occupy these precious hours with reading quietly, doing some housekeeping tasks, or even taking your children to the park for a nice picnic.

By this ONE simple act of waking up early (for Fajr at least) and staying up in those early hours, you'll be instilling self-discipline in your life which will radiate in the rest of your day/actions, Insha'Allah. Also, by this one simple act, you'll be setting yourself up for a productive and healthy post-Ramadan lifestyle that's going to help you throughout the year, Insha'Allah.

DAY 27
Your Last Productive Act

To end this Ramadan feeling satisfied, what is the last productive thing you should do this Ramadan? You don't need to think about it. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) already told us! It's paying zakat-al-fitr!

If you can, try to give this zakat in person this Ramadan instead of doing it via a charitable organization.

It's very easy. All you have to do is follow these 3 steps:

- Go buy 3KG of rice/dates on behalf of yourself + each of your family members whom you support.
- Find a needy Muslim person/family in your local area.
- Deliver! (If you can deliver secretly by leaving it at their doorstep, it would be even better Insha'Allah).

Although it's 'easier' and less of a 'hassle' to do it via a charity organization or online these days, it's a different feeling when you do it physically and deliver it by hand.

May Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala accept all your good deeds in these last blessed nights!

DAY 28
Ramadan Went By So Fast?

If you feel Ramadan went by so fast this year, it's either because you had such an amazing productive Ramadan that time flew by fast and you didn't feel it, OR you were so busy that you didn't notice Ramadan at all except in these last few days.

If you had a ProductiveRamadan, a heartfelt congratulations from the ProductiveMuslim team – we pray that Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala accepts your deeds and grants you many more productive Ramadans in years to come.

If, unfortunately, you didn't make the most of Ramadan and you had a truly unproductive one, do not despair. All you need now is to sincerely face Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala in these last few hours before Ramadan ends and seek repentance from Him for letting this Ramadan slip by you without focusing on it. The worst thing you can do now is to lose hope in Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala's mercy. Repent, give yourself hope, and start putting concrete action steps to make the most of next year's Ramadan, Insha'Allah.

DAY 29
How will you be after Ramadan?

I am going to guess what you're thinking today: you're wondering (or rather you're doubtful) if you'll continue your productivity after Ramadan.

I won't lecture you on the importance of keeping up your productivity (spiritually, physically, socially) after Ramadan. I'm sure you're receiving lots of reminders from your local imam and scholars that are talking about this. But I'll say this:

If, in any moment during the last 29 days, you felt the sweetness of being a Muslim and you want that sweetness to be with you till after Ramadan, then you must continue being spiritually, physically, and socially productive after Ramadan.

How? The formula is very simple: Have sincere intentions & work hard.

I leave you with that thought today.

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DAY 30

Eid Mubarak & Thank You!

Well, this is it – the end of a long beautiful month – but hopefully the start of a new productive life! ;)

The ProductiveMuslim team wishes you all a happy, blessed and – of course – Productive Eid!

If you want to stay productive after Ramadan, keep visiting us in our websites and social media below:

ProductiveMuslim.com

facebook.com/
ProductiveMuslim

@AbuProductive

youtube.com/
ProductiveMuslim

Enjoy yourselves and have a good Eid! Please remember us in your duas.

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FOR MORE TIPS ON HOW TO BE PRODUCTIVE DURING RAMADAN

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